LEVERAGING INFORMAL FOOD BUSINESSES TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A PROTOCOL

Jillian Hill¹, Annalie Wentzel¹, Carmen Klinger², Nicole Holliday², Olufunke Alaba³, Peter Delobelle³, Elochukwu Okanmelu², Peter Philipsborn², Zandile Mchiza¹

¹Non-communicable Diseases Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council ²Public Health and Health Services Research, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU Munich), Germany ³Chronic Disease Initiative for Africa, University of Cape Town

Background

Diet-related disease risk is associated with foods preferred and consumed based on an individual's choice, which is influenced by their environmental, and socio-economic factors. Access to healthy food is influenced by the community and the consumer nutrition environment. Regarding the first, many people in South Africa rely on informal food outlets, particularly street food vendors and Spaza shops, for food purchases. Street foods are ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers in streets and similar places. Spaza Shops "are informal convenience community shop[s] in South Africa, usually run from home", which sell a limited variety of groceries and are generally not registered. The aim of this study is to update, expand and adapt an existing Informal Food Business Model to accommodate Spaza Shops.

Secondary Data Analysis (Street Food Project)

Secondary data analyses from consumer and street food vendor studies to understand the business environment in which street food vendors operate in three areas of interest in Cape Town, South Africa i.e. Gugulethu, Nyanga and Kensington:

Spaza Shop Owner Survey

A survey on the business operations of Spaza shops:

- Mapping of their proximity to markets, food
- producers and the community • Exploring operational information
- Observing spaza shop environment (following the same methodological approach used in the street food project).

Qualitative Study (Policy Environment)

- Exploring the interactions between informal food businesses, regulators, government actors, and
- community organizations Assessing the burden of operating a law-abiding and
- health-compliant informal food business Using desk reviews Using in-depth interviews with stakeholders from various

governmental departments including the departments

of economic development, environmental health and

• Focus group discussions with Spaza Shop owners.

of Business Model

- posed model
 - Refinement of
 - Roll-out and eval-

Future Work:

Feasibility

- uation over a 1-2year period
- Finalization of

Piloting of pro-

- Analysis of survey findings. • Integration of findings & key
- informant recommendations Literature consultation/
- regulations/bylaws Model component
- requirements

Informal Food

Development

Business Model

- Proposed model
- Validation of proposed model with micro and meso-level stakeholders

Pre-liminary Results

(Phase 2) - Mapping

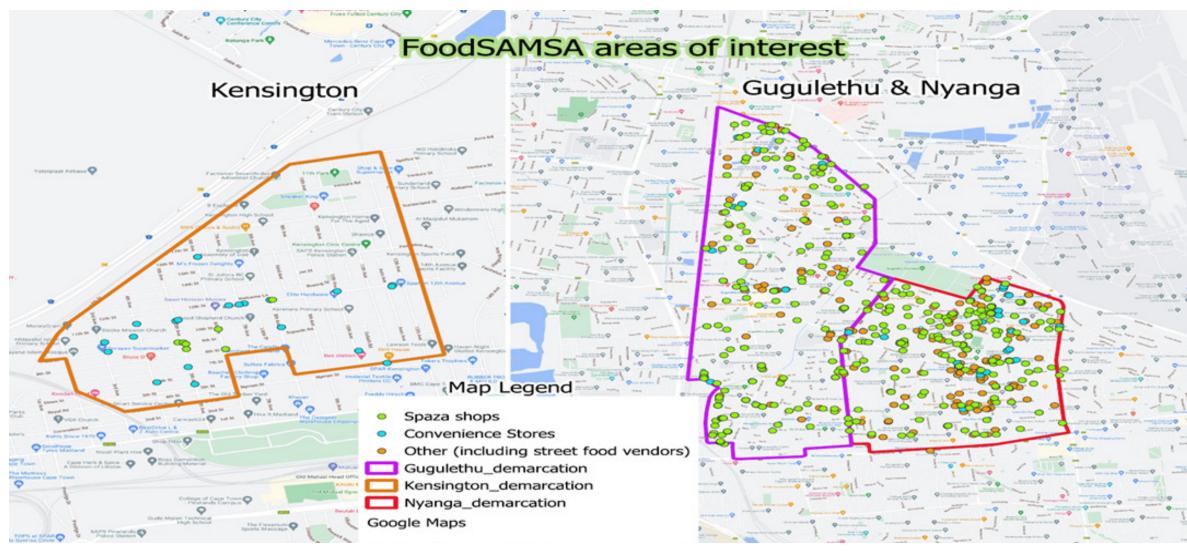


Fig.1. Geospatial mapping of coordinates collected with Redcap instrument using QGIS software.

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Methods

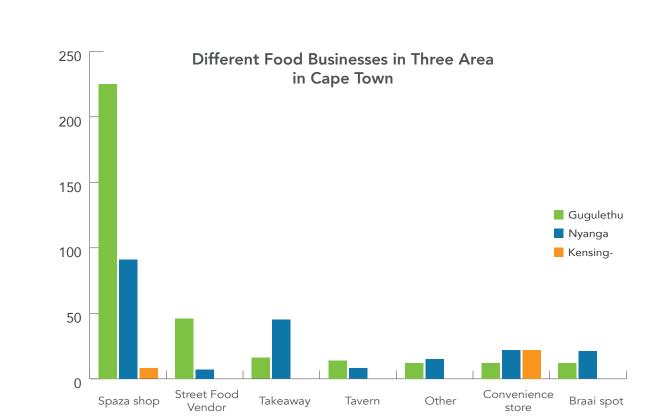
An evidence-based approach, using mixed methods, will be used to develop this model, consisting of four phases:

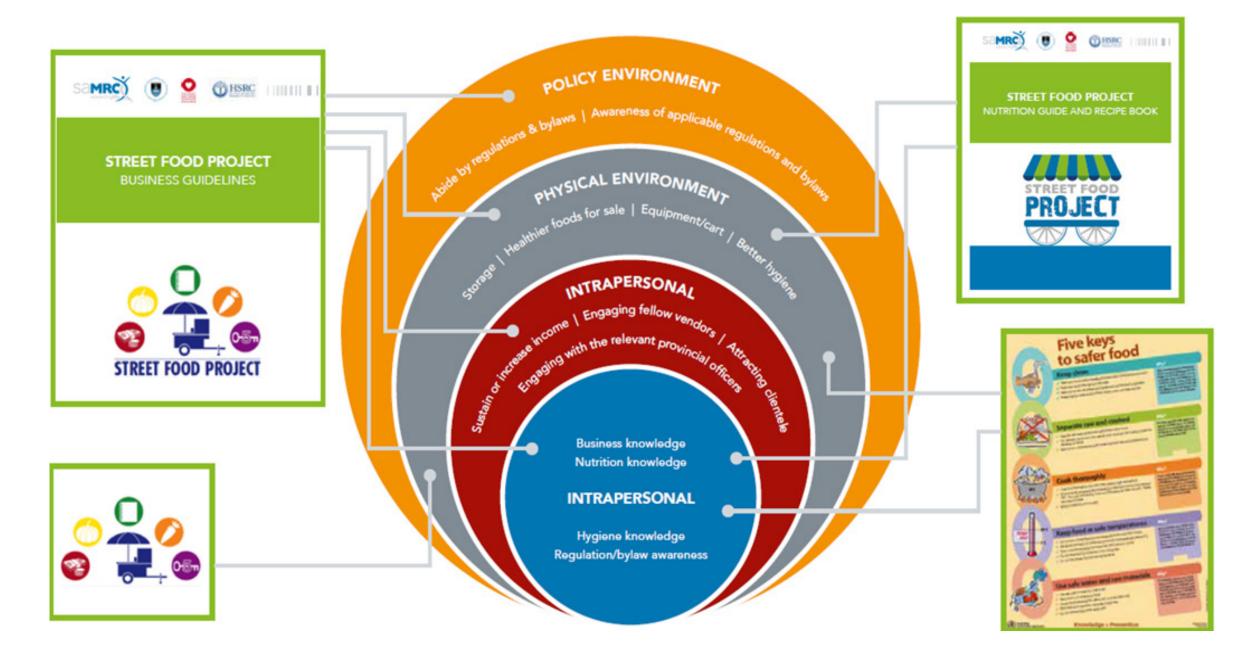
- 1. Secondary data analyses from consumer and street food vendor studies to understand the business environment in which street food vendors operate.
- 2. A spaza shop owner survey to conduct a survey on business operation of the spaza/ community shops and map their proximity to the markets, food producers and community.
- 3. A qualitative study on the interactions between informal food businesses, regulators, government actors, and community organizations, and assessment of the burden of operating a law-abiding and health-compliant informal food business, using desk reviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with Spaza Shop owners.
- 4. Development of an Informal Business Model for street food vendors and Spaza Shops based on the findings from this research and validation of the Informal Business Model.

Community Food Environment

Table 1. Food businesses in three townships in Cape Town

Food Businesses	Gugulethu	Nyanga	Kensington	Total
Spaza shop	225	91	8	324
Street Food Vendor	46	7	1	54
Takeaway	16	45		61
Tavern	14	8		22
Other (Fruit and Veg, etc.)	12	15		27
Convenience store	12	22	22	56
Braai spot (Barbeque)	12	21		33
Takal	227	200	24	F77





Conclusion

This study will result in a new Informal Food Business Model that will empower informal food business owners, such as Street Food Vendors and Spaza Shop owners to run a financially sustainable, health compliant business that supports healthier food choices among consumers.

